REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 11-27 are pending. Claims 11-27 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over USPN 5,995,415 to Kuo et al. (hereinafter "Kuo") in view of USPN 6,016,270 to Thummalapally et al. (hereinafter "Thummalapally").

Claim rejections

Claims 11-27 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kuo in view Thummalapally. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Of all the pending claims 11-27, the Office Action appears to address only claim 11. It is respectfully requested that in the next action the Examiner provide examination of all the pending claims.

Claim 11 distinguishes over Kuo and Thummalapally taken singly or in combination by reciting "a plurality of memory arrays partitioned into first and second memory banks in correspondence with one of a plurality of mask options such that the first memory bank includes at least one but less than all of the plurality of memory arrays and the second memory bank includes a corresponding remainder of the plurality of memory arrays".

The Examiner in paragraph 4 of the Office action initially indicates that Kuo discloses partitioning of a memory array using mask options, and then states:

> Figure 4 of Kuo only shows one array instead of providing a plurality of flash memory arrays as the claimed invention. However, this limitation was well known in the art at the time the invention was made. For example, Figure 1 of Thummalapally discloses a plurality of flash memory arrays (14s).

Applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner's above statement clearly mischaracterizes the claimed invention to be a number of memory arrays each being partitionable using mask options. This is not what is claimed in claim 11. In fact, claim 11 nowhere recites that each memory array can itself be partitioned using mask options as suggested by the Examiner. Rather, claim 11 is directed to partitioning a plurality of memory arrays into two memory banks in correspondence with one of a plurality of mask options. As an example,

which is intended to be merely illustrative and not limiting, assuming there are four memory arrays MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4 in an integrated circuit memory, the four memory arrays may be partitioned into two memory banks as follows:

	Memory bank 1	Memory bank 2
mask option 1:	MA1	MA2, MA3, MA4
mask option 2:	MA1, MA2	MA3, MA4
mask option 3:	MA1, MA2, MA3	MA4

Thus, as can be seen, partitioning a number of memory arrays into two banks in correspondence with a plurality of mask options as recited in applicant's claim 11 is quite distinct from the variation of Kuo suggested by the Examiner, namely, a number of memory arrays wherein each individual memory array can be partitioned into two banks using mask options.

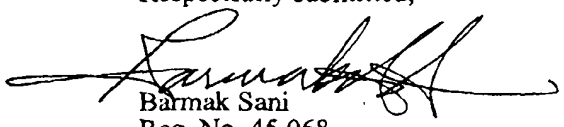
The above-referenced feature of claim 11 is present in all the other independent claims 19, 22, 23, and 27, and therefore all these claims distinguish over the cited references taken singly or in combination at least for the above-stated reason.

Each of independent claims 19, 22, and 27, none of which is addressed in the Office action, recites additional limitations which further distinguish them over the cited references. For example, neither Kuo nor Thummalapally teaches or suggests "reconfigurable row and column selection circuits ... wherein one of a plurality of metal mask options is selected to configure the row and column selection circuits" (underlines are added). Although Kuo shows reconfigurable row selection circuit, Kuo nowhere teaches or suggests reconfigurable column select circuit. This is because Kuo uses metal mask options to breakup bitlines within one memory array which impacts only row selection circuit and not the column selection circuit. That is, in Kuo, column selection circuits are fixed for all mask options (i.e., are non-reconfigurable).

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance and an action to that end is urged.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 650-326-2400.

Respectfully submitted,



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